

North Chicago VA News



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

June 2004

NewsBits

July 31, 2004 1st Annual Car Show For The Veterans

Saturday, July 31st, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Our veterans have served our country well during many international conflicts. Lets thank them by showing them our "Old Iron." For more information contact Haley McLaughlin (847) 688-1900 ext 83204.

COMING UP

Update in next issue on
VA/Navy Joint Venture

August 4 Coast Guard Birthday

Happy 214th Birthday to the Coast Guard established on August 4th 1790. Although the Coast Guard is the smallest U.S. Armed Service, it is the twelfth largest navy, in number of vessels, in the world, and operates the world's seventh largest naval air force.



Doris Freeman and Adriane Taylor of FMS are frequently called upon to use their creative skills decorating Bourke Hall for our special events. Thanks Doris and Adriane, great job!

North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to douglas.shouse@med.va.gov
Contributors for this issue:

Peggy Beyer
Marketing and
Outreach Specialist

Sonia Fulambarker
Preventive Med
Clinical
Coordinator

Nancy Gember
EEO Specialist

Kenny List
Community Affairs

Mary Schindler
Consumer Affairs

Doug Shouse
Executive Assistant

Mary Waterman
Learning Resource
Center

Terri Usher
Social Worker,
HBPC

North Chicago VA Staff "Proud To Care"

I am proud to announce we kicked off our "Promise Kept" for our customer service program. There was a contest for the staff to submit what they thought our "Promise Kept" should be. The phrase promise kept is way of describing what we are all about at North Chicago VA and what our patients and fellow staff can expect from us. We received numerous submissions and after review, it was decided that our "Promise Kept" would be "PROUD TO CARE", which was submitted by Racquel Mordini, SGRC.

During our celebration on May 11, 2004, we unveiled the "Proud to Care" poster, talked about the importance of providing great customer service to our patients as well as our coworkers, recognized staff who participated/implemented the "Proud to Care" customer service program and distributed lanyards to all staff that identifies our "Proud to Care" promise.

When I became Director one of my initiatives was and always will be providing outstanding "Customer Service". Everything we do starts and ends with our patients and our staff. Everyday when I walk through the medical center I see employees providing excellent care and service to our veteran patients and to other staff - They Are - Proud To Care. We want to promote exceptional customer service and that is why we implemented our awards program the OSCARs for "On-the-spot Superior Customer Assistance Recognition" and the WOW Awards, which recognize stand out OSCAR award recipients on a monthly basis. The OSCAR Award allows any employee or supervisor to nominate any other employee. Nominations should be based upon an employee doing something above and beyond their



Proud To Care

normal day-to-day duties. Look around everyday and when you see one of our fellow staff members going above and beyond in providing great customer service please nominate them for an OSCAR award, it is easy to do and is a great way to recognize a fellow staff member. Each OSCAR recipient will receive a \$20 Gift Certificate. Also, each month, the names of the OSCAR recipients will be placed on the electronic bulletin board and in the monthly newsletter.

The WOW Awards are to recognize stand out OSCAR award recipients on a monthly basis. Each Business Unit (Patient Care, Patient Services & Facility Support) will have one WOW recipient per month. Each recipient will receive a Gift Certificate in the amount of \$50, a parking spot for one month and a traveling trophy. The trophy will travel to the next recipient the following month.

The Business Unit Director will present the WOW trophy and the gift certificate to the recipient for the month.

These are some of the ways we hope to recognize employees and a small way of saying THANKS for being Proud to Care!

We look forward to recognizing our employees with these new programs.

“Take A Hike” Fitness Walk



Perfect weather, combined with a genuine desire to get involved contributed to the resounding success of the recent Take A Hike! Fitness Walk organized by the North Chicago Employee Wellness Program.

The Fitness Walk was held on June 15th, 2004 on the grounds of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. The Walk was held to kick-off the newly organized Employee Wellness Program. North Chicago VA Medical Center's Employee Wellness Program is a work in progress and aims to meet wider goals such as Healthy People 2010 and the President's Challenge for Fitness. In addition, employee wellness has known benefits for improving the morale of an organization's

workforce, and events such as these facilitate camaraderie and networking among employees, which is essential for promoting productivity.

North Chicago VA employees have expressed a huge interest in such a program, and Management-under the Leadership of Medical Center Director, Patrick Sullivan, has been most supportive.

The Walk, held during the lunch-period for most employees, drew 110 employees from all areas of the medical center. This was NOT a race and employees had the option of walking a ½ mile or a 1-mile route. Employees joined up with friends and co-workers from the medical center for the Walk, were provided adequate hydration and sun-screen- and perhaps best of all- got to relax with a professional massage at the end of the walk! In addition there were door

prizes, and lots of valuable Wellness related information was shared. The walk took weeks of careful planning and organizing, culminating in an event that was well organized, well advertised and FUN!

Employee Wellness
Planning Committee:
Sonia Fulambarker and
Stephanie D'Angelo- Co-Chairs

In alphabetical order

Marge Ferraresi	Tena Fisher
Valerie Furst	Ed Gember
Jeff Glans	Charline Ivanovic
Willie LaBonne	Susanne Mills
Jyothi Peruri	John Rinkema
Becky Senger	Teena Shealey
Colleen Smoger	Hugo Steinitz
Diego Vega	Mary Waterman



Christmas In April Program Helps Veterans



HBPC nurse Michael Hanley and David and Martha Berg admiring their repaired deck.

The CIA infiltrated 3 NCVA home care program veterans' homes in April. Their mission: to repair, refurbish, and provide other much-needed home and yard tasks. The home care veterans were selected from among numerous applicants for the Lake County 2004 Christmas In April program. The Christmas In April program is nationwide and started in the late 1970's. The program targets disabled or low-income seniors and families for a one-day project to complete a wish list of tasks that are performed by community volunteers. Each CIA project has at least one business sponsor.

81-year-old Robert Miller, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge and a 35 year volunteer at the NCVA was besieged with over 40 CIA volunteers who

painted his garage, living room, kitchen, hall and a wooden and chain link fence. His living room window was also replaced. It had been broken when he was hospitalized earlier this year. His trees were pruned or cut down and his lawn received a full-service manicure.

Another WW2 veteran, 79-year-old Uvil Pearson and his family had an old and leaky roof, which was removed and replaced with brand new shingles.

WW2 veteran David Berg and his wife Martha received several items on their wish list including a new vinyl kitchen floor, a bedroom ceiling fan, a new garage door and roof, a repaired kitchen window and 2 porches, and their garage painted and cleaned out. Volunteers also found a new home for a family of raccoons dwelling inside the garage!

The three veterans were encouraged and assisted in applying for the Christmas In April program by their home care social worker - Teri Usher and their home care nurses Michael Hanley and Susan Murphy. For these three veterans, it's a Christmas In April they'll never forget created by a labor day of caring volunteers!

PACE Vanpool

On June 9, 2004 the Medical Center held presentations for our employees to learn about the PACE VANPOOL PROGRAM. For those who could not be at one of these presentations here is a summary of benefits.

IT COULD MEAN \$ IN YOUR POCKET.

Get 4 people who live in same area to ride together.

Use a PACE VEHICLE.

PACE PAYS FOR GAS, MAINTENANCE, TOLLS and INSURANCE.

VA TRANSIT VOUCHER PAYS UP TO \$100/month for your costs to PACE.

Mileage - Round trip less than 50 miles = totally FREE RIDE.

Mileage - Round trip 51-60 miles, you pay \$4/month.

Mileage - Round trip 61-70 miles, you pay \$8/month.

Sound like a GOOD DEAL? IT SURELY IS.

Curious? Contact Phyllis Pfund for more information at ext. 83267.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month



Reverend David Lee, guest speaker

The medical center proudly joined the nation in celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month on May 27th. The national theme for 2004 was, "Freedom For All, A Nation We Call Our Own". The Master of Ceremonies was Robert Tanjuakio of IRM. The program began with a presentation of flags and the singing of the national anthems in the native languages of China, India, Korea, Philippines and Thailand. Our guest speaker was Reverend David Lee, the Senior Pastor of Harvest Community Church. Mr. Lee has served in China

and Ghana, and this summer he will teach in Nairobi, Kenya. The audience was entertained with music and dance presentations of a Philippine folk dance, Tai Chi from China, a traditional dance from India, and a Korean drum dance. Our very own Philippine Dance Troupe (consisting of employees Bernice Arcibal, Susan Becker, Urbanita Casis, Loida Diwa, Christine Mauleon, and Magylyn Ortiz) was a popular favorite. A taste of ethnic Asian food was savored by all. A special thank you is extended to the Asian Pacific Committee Chairperson, Jung



From left: Jung Jae, Asian Pacific Committee Chairperson honors Indian dancers, Sylvia Vadakara, Tripta Gupta, Marianne Semrad, Associate Medical Center Director for Facility Support, Shruti Gupta, dancer and their Aunt Aleyamma Narikkattu, Mental Health Operations.

Jae, the Committee members, and all staff who worked behind the scene to make this program a success.



Above: Multi-cultural dance Right: Traditional Korean Drums



Exceptional Customer Service Stories

*I just had the most pleasant chat with a most pleasant couple. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Andrew and Toni Bizup of Burbank Illinois. Andrew is 85 and served under General Patton in Europe during WWII. Toni is 79 and is Andrews' second wife. They were next door neighbors when both their spouses passed away around the same time. Andrew invited Toni to lunch and bought her a sandwich. He later invited her to dinner and bought her prime rib... and as Toni said, "the rest was history." Andrew is being seen here for primary care and sees the folks in audiology for hearing aids. They told me that Burbank is fifty-five miles south of North Chicago. Knowing that there are closer facilities, I asked them why they chose North Chicago. They both told me that they come here because of the outstanding care that Andrew receives and that they love the way they are treated by staff when they do come here. I thanked them for those kind words and thanked them for making my day. Sounds to me that we are doing something right. Every once in a while it's good to hear what's right with the world. Submitted by John Snyder, Employee Education.

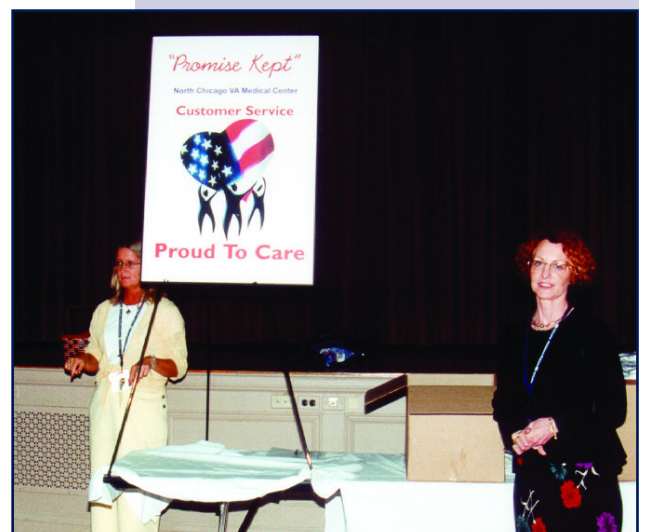
* CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

THE STAFF HERE AT THE NORTH CHICAGO VA MEDICAL CENTER. Within a 24 hour span, we received two identical compliments for the entire staff. Both veterans stated that they received excellent care from the time they walked through the door until their last appointment. They stated "The few times I've been here, the staff and care is 110% better!" and "I felt like I was the only patient in the medical facility." They wanted us to know that even individuals that did not provide healthcare took the time to give directions, take a minute to relieve some stress or just listen to a story about a family member made them feel important. Both veterans stated they wanted to take the time to let us know because they are very impressed with everything here at North Chicago.

Congratulations again and thank you for a great job. Remember that no matter what job we have or the amount of time we spend with a veteran, it does make a difference. A quote from an unknown author "Remember that a great effort is usually the result of a great attitude."

National Hospital Week

National Hospital Week was May 9 - 15. A program was held on May 11 to kick-off our new Promise Kept - "Proud to Care". The program consisted of a brief presentation on our new Customer Service initiative and a raffle drawing. Our lucky employees to win the raffle were: Karl Thoele, staff pharmacist, won a one-month reserved parking spot; Edith Nelson, nursing assistant, and Dwylia Wright, health technician in Patient Administration, each won an 8 hour time-off award. As a sign of appreciation, our employees were treated to a luncheon in Bourke Hall. The menu included a variety of pizza, salad, breadsticks, soda and brownies.



From left: Mary Schindler and Sharon Pusateri, OPI, unveil "Proud To Care" for National Hospital Week



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

North Chicago VA Honors Nurses

The Excellence in Nursing Award annually honors four individuals: two Registered Nurses, one in a staff nurse role and one in an expanded nurse role; a Licensed Practical Nurse or Licensed Vocational Nurse; and a Nursing Assistant. Awardees are actively engaged in the care of patients at a VA facility. The recipients' contributions to the care of patients in any VA health care setting are patient-centered and demonstrate such excellence as to merit recognition from peers.

On Thursday, May, 6, 2004, during National Nurses week, North Chicago VA Medical Center Leadership presented nursing staff members with certificates and awards for being either selected as a recipient of the 2004 North Chicago Excellence in Nursing Award or a nominee in these categories.



Emily White, NA - 2004 VISN 12 Recipient and North Chicago VAMC Recipient of the 2004 Secretary's Excellence in Nursing Award

Not only was Ms. Emily White, NA, selected for the North Chicago VAMC Nursing Assistant category she was also selected as the 2004

VISN 12 Nursing Assistant Recipient! Her nomination package was sent on for review in Central Office for consideration of the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing.

Ms. Somchit Sutti, RN, and Ms. Michelle Tanner, RN, BSN, MA, were selected as the North Chicago VAMC 2004 Nursing Recipients, while Ms. Racquel Mordini, LPN, was selected at the North Chicago VAMC 2004 Licensed Practical Nurse Recipient.

Nominees also recognized for their accomplishments are as follows: Ms. Barbara Nixon, NA; Mr. Eddie Shaw, NA; Ms. Annie Southall, NA; Ms. Kyung Lee, RN; Ms. Maria Witkowska, RN; Ms. Rose Vongskul, RN and Mr. Kenneth King, RN.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!!



Michelle Tanner RN, BSN, MA, North Chicago VAMC 2004 Secretary's Excellence in Nursing Recipient



Somchit Sutti, RN, North Chicago VAMC 2004 Secretary's Excellence in Nursing Recipient



Racquel Mordini, LPN, North Chicago VAMC 2004 Secretary's Excellence in Nursing Recipient

SEDOL AWARDS ITS STUDENTS



On May 28th, 2004, the SEDOL (Special Education District of Lake County) program had its annual Recognition Breakfast at the

Ramada Inn in Waukegan. The SEDOL Program provides training and work experience through medical center staff mentoring for special need students. During the past 24 years, over 725 Lake County high school students have received this training at the North Chicago VA Medical Center representing over 730,000 volunteer man hours which provides a win-win situation for the VA and the Community. This training helps the students become far better prepared for

employment and assuring their role in society. The Recognition Breakfast brings together the students, parents, teachers, job coaches, and their VA supervisors. This year 34 students and 41 supervisors were recognized and received various awards. Our thanks and gratitude goes out to the students for the invaluable services they provide and to the VA Staff for mentoring them. Pictured are the Sedol students who worked at our medical center this past year.